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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2010

US Embassy Ankara - Turkey Media Reaction - February 2, 2010 as
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How the US is Playing

A/S Phil Gordon calls on Turkey and Armenia To Ratify Protocols
In early reporting, Hurriyet On-Line in "US calls on Turkey and
Armenia to Ratify the Protocols" reports that A/S Gordon told a
press conference that Turkey and Armenia need to move forward in
ratifying and implementing protocols signed last October on
establishing diplomatic relations. "We believe this is an
opportunity to overcome really historic differences between the two
countries in a way that would benefit both," Gordon said. "To
establish normalized relations between the two countries and open
the border would contribute to peace and stability in the region,
and we think that is true regardless of other issues -- that it
needs to move forward independently of other issues, simply because
it is in the interest of the two countries," he said. Gordon said
that US government was in touch with both government and that Obama
administration encouraged them to move forward. "Turkey-Armenia
normalization is a good thing in and of itself and it should move
forward because of that," he added.

Summit to Discuss Makhmur Camp (Sabah)
In twin stories from a leaked source, mainstreams Aksam and Sabah
both report that Iraq commander General Odierno will make a 3 day
visit to Ankara starting February 2. In "Hood Incident General is
Coming for Makhmur," Aksam describes General Odierno as the person
who was responsible for the hood incident when Turkish military
officers were detained in northern Iraq by American troops on July
4, 2003. According to Aksam, the US and Iraq will submit a report
on the number of refugees in the camp, their ages and their
expectations. In addition, an offer by Odierno to deploy US troops
in some critical areas in Northern Iraq, tabled in a meeting with
journalists in Iraq last August, will be considered, adds Aksam.
Mainstream Sabah reports that the meeting will be between General
Ray Odierno and Turkish and Iraqi Foreign Ministry Officials with
Interior Ministry bureaucrats, Security Department terror and
intelligence officials, Gendarmerie, MIT and TGS officials also
attending. The Sabah report says the meetings will focus on how to
evacuate the camp and how and where in Turkey to bring the refugees.

US Embassy: "It's Absurd to Link the US to Ergenekon Investigation" (Sabah and others)

All papers today report that the spokesperson described the allegation of US involvement in the Ergenekon case as "absurd" and in a press release Monday said the embassy "could not comment on an ongoing case in a Turkish court." Aksam and Sabah earlier reported that a part of the Ergenekon indictment alleged that a car registered to the US Consulate in Istanbul had entered a military zone to take photographs of an excavation scene in the Poyrazkoy district where weapons and explosives were unearthed last April.

US Defense Strategy. In "Nobel Prize Winner Obama Allocates \$160 Billion for War," mainstream Milliyet reports that "Obama allocates \$708 billion for the military budget with \$160 billion for Iraq and Afghanistan" while noting that "President Obama proposed a \$3.8 trillion budget to the Congress" which "targets economic recovery with plans to double exports in five years and create employment for 2 million people." Islamist-oriented Zaman "In "US Budget Deficit \$1.3 Trillion," says "Obama's budget proposal forecasts a \$1.56 trillion deficit in 2010." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet focuses on the "Fight Against Terror Everywhere" and highlights that the "Pentagon shifts its 25 year strategy to focus on preparing for a range of threats in various regions rather than being prepared to fight two wars at the same time." Liberal Radikal follows up on the war theme, headlining "Obama Follows Bush," and thinks, "Nobel prize winner Obama, who is called the 'president of war', follows in the

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steps of his predecessor by allocating a record budget to Iraq and Afghanistan wars." Columnist Husnu Mahalli of mainstream Aksam objects strongly to the new defense strategy which he calls "war mongering." He opines: "Despite his election-winning slogans of change and peace, President Obama started to pursue a war mongering attitude after less than a year in the office. Events of the past tell a lot about how local people suffered while the US and Western style war-democracies played games in the Islamic geographic areas. Let's not forget that Washington had promised to bring democracy to the Middle East by invading Iraq and Afghanistan. Those who have high hopes for Obama should think twice."

US Religious Freedoms Report Criticized by Turkish Party Leader "The US provided security training for religious minorities in Turkey" proclaims a banner headline in nationalist Tercuman which covers criticism from Islamist oriented Saadet Party leader Numan Kurtulmus. Kurtulmus quotes a paragraph from State Department's Religious Freedoms report, "The consulate general in Istanbul provided training for minority religious communities as a part of its overall security strategy" and demands a public explanation for "the purpose, intention and reasoning" for this training. SP leader told reporters that he requested information both from Istanbul Consulate General and the Istanbul Governorship. He said he did not get any response from the Consulate, and the Governor's office told him "they were not involved in this training and have no information what it is all about."

In the Headlines

Armenian Foreign Ministry: "Erdogan is Distorting the Facts" (Hurriyet)

Armenian Foreign Ministry spokesman Tigran Balayan said that during his interview with the Euro News TV, PM Erdogan distorted the facts when commenting on the Turkey-Armenia normalization process. Arm Info news agency quotes Balayan as saying "As Armenia, we did and we are doing everything on our part, whatever was determined by the road map and by the signed protocols between Turkey and Armenia."

'Disciplinary Penalty' for Using Phosphor Bomb in Gaza (Hurriyet) In "Phosphor Bomb Confession from Israel," mainstream Vatan reports Israel has announced two high level military officers were given "disciplinary penalties" for firing phosphor bombs at a UN building in Gaza during operation Cast Lead. "They Went Unpunished Again," reads a headline in Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak which says only one Israeli soldier was convicted so far for actions during the invasion

and that was for stealing the credit cards of a Palestinian. Mainstream, pro-government Sabah says Israel has admitted to its crimes during the Gaza operation which strained ties between Turkey and Israel.

UNSYG's Talat Visit Angers Greek Cypriots (Zaman)

Media outlets report that UNSYG Ban Ki-Moon paid a visit to Cyprus to boost peace talks for the reunification of the island. Zaman and Milliyet comment, however, that the visit was overshadowed when Ban met Talat in the Turkish Cypriot presidential palace. Greek Cypriots were angered, saying it amounted to "recognition" of the breakaway state in the north, and media report the UN was forced to announce that the Greek Cypriot administration was the only legitimate government on the island. In a joint press conference he held with Talat and Christofias, Ban said he was "impressed" with the progress recorded in the negotiations so far. "Your fate is in your own hands," Ban told the leaders, and expressed faith that the two leaders would reach a mutually acceptable solution.

Turkish Consulate to Barzani's Capital (Hurriyet)

Mainstream Hurriyet reports that the central Baghdad administration accepted Turkey's proposal to open a consulate in Irbil, the capital of the autonomous Kurdish region headed by Massoud Barzani. The Turkish Consulate in Irbil will be responsible for Dohuk and Sulaymaniye as well. Hurriyet says that in line with the principle of reciprocity, Iraq will open a new consulate in Turkey.

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Turkey Leading Country in Human Rights Violations (Cumhuriyet)

Turkish papers carry a Guardian article which says Turkey was named as the "worst violator of the 47 signatory states" to the European convention of human rights from 1959 to 2009. The article cites the case of a Kurdish teenage girl named Berivan who was sentenced to seven years and nine months for "terror crimes" at a protest rally in the southeastern city of Batman. "The conviction highlights Turkey's practice of jailing children for terror-related offences under counter-terrorism legislation introduced in 2006," writes the Guardian, and notes that recent official figures revealed there are currently 2,622 minors in Turkish prisons.

Attempts to Bring Haitian Children to Turkey Faltering (Hurriyet online)

Mainstream Hurriyet website reports a Turkish charity, the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) said the Haitian government has suspended IHH's efforts to bring Haitian children to Turkey after an incident with an American group allegedly trying to transport children out of Haiti. The IHH has been providing food for 2,000 people, including 700 children separated from their parents. Islamist-oriented Zaman reports the Turkish Red Crescent has set up a "tent city" in Port au Prince.

Editorial Commentary on Turkish Foreign Policy Formulation

Several columnists are worried about possible consequences of the Turkish foreign policy formulation and its "global player" approach.

In mainstream Milliyet, columnist Sami Kohen not only points out some negative events in the past but also foresees a few upcoming problems: "When Turkey hosted the Pakistan-Afghanistan conference, India was not invited due to Pakistan's sensitivity. This attitude later caused tension with New Delhi. Similarly, Turkey had to fine tune its Armenia normalization protocol for the sake of Azeri sensitivity. Middle East policy and Ankara's closeness to Hamas continues to be a problem vis-à-vis Israel and some Arab countries, and Turkey's Iran policy has certainly enough potential to create problems for Ankara in international platforms, including the UNSC."

Sami Kohen concludes that "being a global actor in foreign policy" is certainly a nice goal but all pros and cons have to be carefully calculated. Columnist Utku Cakirozer in mainstream Aksam points to the Iran and Armenia issues to "create headaches" for Ankara: "Soon the UNSC will start discussing sanctions against Iran and the options vary from economic embargo to military operation. Ankara distanced itself from the democracy debate on Iran, however, the growing popular resistance against the Iran regime must be carefully analyzed. It is also possible to see a crisis with Washington over the genocide issue. President Obama may feel more obliged to Armenian claims, especially on the eve of by-elections."

Breaking News - ECHR Ruling: CNN Turk online and television report the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled that the denial of a Turkish citizen's demand to register his religion as "Alevi" instead of "Islam" was a violation of religious freedom. The court also released a ruling that said that Turkey was "right" in denying the request of eight of its citizens to have their names written on their ID cards using Kurdish characters.

TV Spotlight (CNN Turk)

"Tekel" workers striking in Ankara and the government have failed to agree. Workers will go on a hunger strike today.

A court annulled a 772.5 million lira fine given to Dogan Media Holding for irregularities in the sale of shares to Axel Springer group. Finance Ministry said it will appeal the ruling.

On Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki will visit Ankara to meet PM Erdogan and join a meeting of the Turkey-Iran Joint Economic Commission.

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Japanese credit rating company JCR has upgraded Turkey's credit rating to BB from BB- saying Turkey was resistant to foreign shocks.

Burhan Kuzu, head of the parliament's constitutional affairs committee, said they would not scrap the ten-percent election threshold in Turkey.

The Greek government prepares a report for the settlement of the problems of the Turkish minority in Western Thrace.

At least 54 Shiite pilgrims are killed in Baghdad and over 100 others are wounded, when a female suicide bomber detonated near a crowded checkpoint.

JEFFREY